UNITED NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/C.12/1993/SR.9
3 June 1993

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Eighth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 9th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 19 May 1993, at 3 p.m.

Chairperson: Mr. ALVAREZ VITA
later: Mr. ALSTON

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GE.93-16603 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS (agenda item 5) (continued)

(a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT (continued)

Islamic Republic of Iran (E/1990/6/Add.3) (continued)

1. The CHAIRPERSON invited the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to reply to the questions put by members at the previous meeting.

2. Mr. TABATABAEE (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that before replying to the oral questions of the members of the Committee, he wished to say that the Iranian delegation now had all the written answers to the Committee's written questions and that when he had replied to the remaining questions he would present those replies.

3. Replying to a question by Mrs. Ider on the right to strike, he said that such a right did indeed exist and was regulated by article 142 of the new Labour Code.

4. In reply to Mrs. Ider's question as to whether women received pensions, he said that article 20 of the Constitution provided that every citizen was protected by law and could enjoy social, economic and political rights. There was no discrimination as regards pensions and women as well as men received them.

5. In reply to a question as to why single people did not receive the same unemployment benefits as married ones, he explained that that was because unemployed married people needed more support than single persons, because of their family and social commitments.

6. Mrs. Ider had asked whether there had been many shut-downs of enterprises by labour inspectors because of non-compliance with regulations. In accordance with articles 96 to 116 of the Labour Code, inspections were an ongoing process and, after warnings, the appropriate authority was entitled to take legal action against offenders when circumstances required. Labour inspectors were also entitled to enter and inspect premises without prior notice at any time of the day or night. Their reports had the same validity as those of officers of the courts. There had been cases of work units being closed, many had received warnings, and the Government and the Ministry of Labour took the matter very seriously. The Ministry of Labour had in fact established a special authority to train inspectors and promote the inspection system throughout the country.

7. Mrs. Bonoan-Dandan had asked about the first five-year development plan, the role given to the private sector under the plan and how it was being coordinated. Under that plan, investments were encouraged and supported, and the economic balance in the different markets restored. The Government had considerably decreased unnecessary investment in the economic sector, and stress had been laid on market forces in the plan. Deregulation and

privatization had been introduced, and the role of the private sector in the economic policies of the country had been promoted in order to complement the work of the different government bodies.

8. In the cultural sphere, Mrs. Ider had asked whether artistic activities were pursued and whether non-religious societies received any support for their activities. More than 2,500 cultural and artistic societies, in cinema, theatre, music, traditional arts and related fields, were active in the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Government allocated funds for such activities to the private sector. Many art manifestations, mainly on an annual basis, were held throughout the country, and had included international film, theatre, music and puppet festivals.

9. In connection with Mr. Kouznetsov's question about freedom of the press, he said that in the Islamic Republic of Iran over 600 weekly, monthly or yearly newspapers, magazines and journals were published in the cultural, scientific and political fields, totalling over 450 million copies a year. There had been a 130 per cent increase in such publications over the last 15 years and they provided a chance for people to express their opinions on social, cultural and economic issues.

10. Turning to the list of issues raised in document E/C.12/1993/WP.11, and specifically on measures such as benefits, subsidies, tax exemptions and child care facilities, he said that one such measure had been the establishment, in accordance with article 21, paragraph 3, of the Constitution, of courts to safeguard the sanctity of the family, which had to come to a decision within five days. The relevant law also set out the competence of such courts and the cases that could be addressed to it.

11. Moreover, Parliament had adopted a law to amend divorce regulations, article 1 of which provided that couples who had decided to separate or divorce had to bring their dispute to the competent court which then had to open the case immediately. The law contained articles dealing with the way in which each of the spouses could bring in their witnesses and how the court verified the competence of those witnesses. The law also contained articles dealing with written reports on the current situation of the spouses, custody of children, psychiatric counselling and related aspects.

12. Other measures included a law providing for a retirement benefit of 50 per cent of the monthly salary of male government employees, and a benefit amounting to 10 per cent of salary for each child under 20 years old, up to a maximum of three children. Yet another measure under the Labour Code adopted five years earlier was three days' extra leave for married workers and three days' leave on the death of a wife, mother or child. There were also provisions dealing with the benefits paid by employer to nursing mothers, as had already been mentioned.

13. As far as housing was concerned, many people, according to their family situation, received financial support depending on the distance they lived from their workplace, for food and fares. Many regulations thus existed to promote the establishment of the family unit.

14. On the issue raised in paragraph 11 of the working paper, the situation of single mothers, he said that according to the law concerning single mothers and orphans adopted two years earlier by Parliament and also under article 21 of the Constitution, women and children who did not enjoy any other protection received government support. That category included widows and senior citizens, and the support was in cash or in kind, provided either continuously or on an ad hoc basis. Educational and scientific services, health care, assistance in finding employment and in remarrying and re-establishing a family unit were also provided. Such measures included day and night care units for children and older men and women.

15. With regard to paragraph 12 concerning the fertility rate of Iranian women, he explained that maternity leave for women workers totalled 90 days per year. A minimum of 45 days had to be taken after childbirth, and annual leave was extended by 14 days in each case. Women could return to their former jobs after childbirth and the employer had to follow the physician's orders if women workers were unable to do the same job as before they gave birth.

16. There were regulations dealing with work units employing women workers. Progress had been achieved in the mandatory establishment in each unit of child-care facilities, from which working mothers could benefit. Employers had to allow mothers a half-hour break every three hours to nurse their children up to the age of two. Employers who failed to comply with those regulations could be fined up to 10 times the minimum wage of the worker in question. In addition, there were provisions concerning women workers who did not wish to go on working after childbirth. The regulation decreasing the yearly leave of a worker pregnant for the fourth time had been introduced because of the high average birthrate of 3.2 children per couple, and the consequent need to educate families to have fewer children.

17. The documentation available included a chart showing the birth rate per thousand population, in urban and rural areas, for October 1991. The Iranian Government was determined to reduce the total fertility rate, a goal it was seeking to achieve through carefully planned activities such as literacy programmes, qualitative and quantitative development of health houses in rural areas where fertility rates were higher than the national average, use of women volunteers to disseminate information on family planning, improvement of the status of women in society and their participation in the economic, social, cultural and political life of the country, reviewing regulations and policies incompatible with the population control programmes, increasing public knowledge of those programmes, inclusion of population control materials in the national education curriculum, increasing the quality of services through better training of personnel, provision of free contraceptives, better coordination of organizations active in family planning programmes, and establishment of relations with international organizations. The written documentation contained further recommendations in that regard.

18. Concerning paragraph 13 of the working paper, his delegation had provided a complete list of day-care centres, together with information on the qualifications of directors of the centres and the cost of attendance.

Concerning question 14, a shorter working day for women did not mean lower wages. Provisions also existed for the protection of women falling into the categories referred to in question 15.

19. Turning to article 11 of the Covenant, he said that his delegation would provide members with the results of studies concerning the distribution of foodstuffs. On paragraph 23, it had gathered together the main laws, administrative regulations and collective agreements intended to promote the right of everyone to adequate food. As for the issues raised in paragraphs 30 to 32 of the working paper, his country enjoyed a high per capita income and problems of hunger and inadequate clothing were thus not an issue. The Government considered that its role was to provide people with the facilities that would enable them to feed and clothe themselves adequately. Nevertheless, at the wish of the pre-sessional working group, his delegation was in the process of contacting the competent Ministries in order to ascertain what provisions existed in those areas. His delegation had also prepared written information concerning members' other questions on articles 10 to 15 of the Covenant, which he was unfortunately unable to review orally, for lack of time.

20. The CHAIRPERSON thanked the Iranian delegation for the supplementary information it had provided. The results of the Committee's subsequent deliberations on the report of the Islamic Republic of Iran would be communicated to the delegation in due course.

21. Mr. Tabatabaee, Mr. Fannizadeh, Mr. Shiradj, Mr. Masjed-Jamei, Mr. Hosseini, Mr. Khirouzi and Mr. Nasseri (Islamic Republic of Iran) withdrew.

22. Mr. Alston took the Chair.

Viet Nam (E/1990/5/Add.10)

23. The CHAIRPERSON invited the Committee to consider the initial report submitted by Viet Nam under articles 1 to 15 of the Covenant (E/1990/5/Add.10).

24. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Nguyen Luong, Mr. Nguyen Van Son, Mrs. Nguyen Thi Nha and Mrs. Ha Thi Ngoc Ha (Viet Nam) took places at the Committee table.

25. Mr. NGUYEN LUONG (Viet Nam), introducing the initial report of his country (E/1990/5/Add.10), said that Viet Nam was undergoing a process of renovation, and that it was open to the world and ready to cooperate with all friendly countries of the world community. The report submitted to the Committee for consideration had been based on the provisions of the 1980 Constitution. However, on 15 April 1992 the National Assembly had adopted a new Constitution, reflecting the far-reaching changes that the political, economic and social life of the country had undergone since 1986. He would thus provide an update of recent developments in application of the Covenant's provisions in the light of the new Constitution.

26. Having recovered its independence and sovereignty after more than 80 years of colonial domination, the Vietnamese people had had to wait a further 30 years before becoming a member of the United Nations in 1977 as a sovereign and reunified country. By 1981 Viet Nam had become a party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. In 1982 it had acceded to the two International Covenants, and had subsequently become a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity. Viet Nam was thus deeply attached to the human rights which independence had enabled it to discover and realize. The process of application of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, with its attendant challenges, had provided many valuable lessons, showing that the two International Covenants were in fact inseparable, and that without the realization of economic rights there could be no realization of other rights; that application of the provisions of the two Covenants was an ongoing process that could take place only in a climate of political, economic and social stability; and that implementation of their provisions must take account of traditional national values, and could not be imposed from outside. Against that background, the process of policy renewal had afforded glimpses of the conditions and possibilities for application of the Covenant's provisions in the long or medium term, while raising serious constraints in the short term.

27. His country had once believed that an equitable distribution of social benefits would generate the synergy necessary to build a powerful and prosperous nation. That had proved not to be the case; social measures had not worked an economic miracle; on the contrary, economic activity had withered as a result of the State's desire to tackle all fronts simultaneously without the necessary resources, and equality had been achieved at the expense of prosperity. Now, with the advent of a dynamic market economy, there was bound to be some polarization of rich and poor. Realization of the right to work, for example, posed evident challenges: the State was encouraging job creation initiatives and the number of jobs was likely to increase; but incomes were falling as a result of recourse to job sharing and highly labour intensive employment. Health and education were two other areas where services were deteriorating as a result of inadequate funding. Cultural activities were also to some extent subject to market forces, since the State no longer had the necessary resources to promote values that did not command a price in the market-place. In that context of opportunities and challenges, there was inevitably a price to be paid in the short term, and the State must play a role as intermediary.

28. The CHAIRPERSON thanked the representative of Viet Nam for his opening remarks, and invited members of the delegation to respond to the Committee's questions.

29. Mr. NGUYEN LUONG (Viet Nam) said that many of the problems raised in the questions put by members had already been resolved in the new Constitution of 15 April 1992. Regarding paragraph 1 in the list of issues submitted by the pre-sessional working group (E/C.12/1993/WP.9), he said that Viet Nam had

no specific entity or body to deal with human rights. However, the issue was essentially one of perspective: Viet Nam perceived human rights as falling within the competence of every organ of the State administration at every level. Article 94 of the new Constitution stipulated that citizens had the right to lodge with any competent State authority a complaint or denunciation regarding transgression of the law by any State body, economic or social organization, force, unit or individual. Complaints and denunciations must be examined and dealt with within a period of time stipulated by law, and victims were entitled to compensation for damages, and to rehabilitation. The courts at each level of administration must reply to all questions put and complaints lodged in that regard.

30. With regard to prisoners of conscience, mentioned in paragraph 4 of the working paper, no such persons existed in Viet Nam. Prisoners so described were in fact persons who had broken the law of the land. Under article 132 of the new Constitution, the defendant's right to plead his case, personally or through a representative, was guaranteed. A jurists' organization was to be formed, to assist defendants and other persons in defending their legal rights and interests, and to contribute to the defence of socialist legislation. Elsewhere, the new Constitution guaranteed the right to use one's mother-tongue in defence proceedings.

31. With regard to the death penalty, provision existed in the Criminal Code for a range of sanctions, including the death penalty, to be applied to murderers, and also to persons illegally producing, storing, marketing or transporting large quantities of hard drugs, or abusing positions of power for that purpose; and to those guilty of other offences against national security. Article 87 of the Penal Code provided for 12 to 20 years' imprisonment, a life sentence or the death penalty in cases of hijacking of ships or planes, depending on the gravity of the act. The death penalty was, therefore, reserved for offenders who had committed serious crimes endangering human life or national security, or those involved in the drugs traffic. It was not applicable in the case of economic offences. In cases of fraudulent imitation, particularly of pharmaceutical products available on the national market, there had, however, been significant public demand for harsher punishment than that currently prescribed for such offences.

32. Turning to the group of issues raised on the right to work, he said that the drafting of the new labour code had already reached an advanced stage and was expected to be submitted to the National Assembly for its approval in June 1993. His Government had benefited from the services of ILO experts in the preparation of that draft legislation and international labour standards had been taken into consideration. The draft code, which was a voluminous document, had been widely circulated within the country and a copy was available for members of the Committee who wished to consider its provisions in greater detail.

33. On the question of employment protection and safeguards against arbitrary dismissal, article 41 of the draft labour law made provision, in addition to that of termination of employment by giving due notice, for workers to terminate an employment contract unilaterally at short notice in cases where: the worker had not been assigned the work place or employed under the conditions stipulated in the contract; was not paid the full amount specified

or at the time agreed, was ill-treated by the employer; was elected to full time public office, or could not comply with the employment contract due to serious family difficulties. Article 42 made provision for the employer to terminate the employment contract by giving due notice or where: the worker failed to perform his task; had been absent from work for more than 24 working hours a month or 80 working hours in a year without just reason; had committed an act of theft, embezzlement or other offence which seriously affected the interests of the employer; had been ill without any prospect of recovery during six consecutive months of treatment, and in cases of natural disaster, fire or force majeure; where the employer was compelled to reduce production and work costs, or in the event of the liquidation of the enterprise. Provision was also made in certain cases for consultations between employers and executive committees of enterprises, trade unions or workers' representatives, although the final decision remained that of the employer.

34. Concerning the question of purchasing power and the average minimum living wage, he was not able to provide exact figures. It should be borne in mind that while the minimum wage was low in terms of United States dollars, the country was not in a situation of famine or absolute poverty and people managed to live, possibly better than previously, because they were on the whole industrious and sought to increase their basic income by also working in the informal sector - a sector which had proved to be very effective but difficult to assess in financial terms.

35. It was not possible to provide details of the percentage of men and women in the main areas of production, although women were in the majority in such sectors as education, public health, light industry, agriculture, and the textile and clothing industry, usually as workers, where they received equal wages for equal work. In that respect, article 63 of the Constitutions stipulated, inter alia, that all citizens, regardless of their sex, had equal rights in all respects - political, economic, cultural, social and in family life. It also made specific provision for the status and protection of women. A review of wage rates was currently being undertaken with the assistance of the International Labour Office. Under the new system, in the interests of greater efficiency and production, the gap between the minimum and maximum wage would be greater than in the past, when the accent had been placed on equality.

36. Turning to the group of issues relating to the right to just and favourable conditions of work, and referring specially to the right to medical care, he confirmed that medical care was provided free of charge in Viet Nam. However, in practice, the State encountered financial difficulties in procuring sufficient amounts of pharmaceutical products, and it was therefore common for people to buy such products on the black market. Concerning the maximum radiation levels for workers, it should be noted that there was only one small reactor in Viet Nam, which was used for research purposes. It was forbidden for any person under the age of 18 to be employed there and the functioning of the reactor was subject to the standards and supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

37. Concerning workers' rights to rest periods and holidays, article 80 of the draft labour code made provision for paid holidays for all workers having worked for 11 consecutive months in an enterprise. Under the new legislation,

there would no longer be any differentiation in terms of the amount of annual leave, which would be a basic 12 days a year, not including the time it took for a worker to travel between his place of work and home region. The draft legislation also envisaged the possibility of increasing annual leave to 15 or 18 days, depending on how arduous the work was. Workers in Viet Nam were also entitled to eight days' paid leave a year on the occasion of public holidays, as well as paid leave for reasons of marriage or death in the immediate family, in accordance with Vietnamese tradition and culture. The draft labour legislation provided for compensation to be paid where an employer asked a worker to work on a day on which he would otherwise not have been required to work.

38. Concerning trade union rights, the system was similar to that which had prevailed in eastern Europe, with trade unions being invested with considerable responsibilities. The new labour code stipulated that trade unions would have the responsibility to follow matters of labour policy and conditions of work closely. The National Confederation of Trade Unions had the right to propose draft legislation to the National Assembly and to be represented during official discussions on workers' rights. Written material about the situation in the factory or workplace existed, inter alia, in the form of a regularly published and widely read newspaper which contained not only articles on workers rights but also critical articles on such subjects as cases of abuse of power and corruption.

39. Concerning the right to social security, while a social security system had been in place for some time which contained far reaching provisions, in practice it functioned to the extent permitted by the limited means available to the State. A pension system, such as those which existed in European countries, was not available in Viet Nam; however, given the close family structure which still prevailed in Vietnamese society, workers tended to regard their children and grandchildren as a potential source of support in their old age. The retirement age had been set at 55 years for women and 60 for men; under the new labour code it would be 60 years for both men and women.

40. Concerning the protection of the family, mothers and children, he referred to the consideration of his country's initial report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/3/Add.4) and subsequent exchange of views within that Committee at its session in January 1993. Article 151 of the draft labour code, which made provision for maternity leave and benefits was of particular relevance in relation to the protection of mothers. Benefits applied particularly for the birth of first and second children, and those provisions should be seen in the context of Viet Nam's very high birth rate, its demographic problems and its low per capita gross national product which made it imperative to encourage a reduction in the birth rate.

41. In reply to the request in paragraph 20 of the working paper for information on the legislation on abortion and contraception, he said that a wide-ranging media campaign on family planning was under way, recommending that couples should have no more than one or two children. Abortion was available on request. If a third child was born the family would have fewer means, but no force had been used to compel recourse to abortion or contraception. The campaign was rather one of intensive persuasion, including

the performance of plays and other works of art demonstrating the benefits of family planning, particularly for working women, and even for men if the children of a large family were ill and had to stay at home, with parents looking after them. Moreover, medicine was expensive. In rural areas, however, sons were considered a capital investment; such an attitude was one of the cultural and economic restraints on his country which it would need more time to overcome.

42. With regard to paragraph 21, he said that according to paragraph 135 of Viet Nam's initial report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC/C/3/Add.4) 40 per cent of children adopted by foreigners went to Scandinavians, 40 per cent to other West Europeans and 20 per cent to North Americans. Noting that adoptions by Swiss couples had been successful, he said that his country took care to control and monitor adoption, believing that it retained responsibility for adopted children until they were adult, particularly in view of the abuses that could be perpetrated, such as trafficking in children's organs. The parents of adopted children were required to send an annual report on the child's progress, together with a photograph. Article 64 of the Constitution stated that the family was the nucleus of society. Marriage was to be entered into freely and must be based on progressivism, monogamy and equality between husband and wife. Children were to be brought up as useful citizens, respecting and caring for their parents and grandparents. There was no discrimination among children of the same family. Under article 65 the protection, the care and education of children was the joint responsibility of the State, society and the family. Under article 67 the orphans of men who had died in the service of their country, and the children of disabled soldiers and others who had rendered services to their country, were entitled to assistance if they had no family support.

43. Turning to paragraph 22, he said that there were no statistics on the incidence of divorce, but while not yet too serious a problem, it appeared to be on the increase in the towns, as a result of the influence of Western values. The reasons for divorce had not yet been properly analysed. One factor was the freedom to choose one's workplace: although good in itself, it could lead to dissension between a husband and wife who wanted to work in different towns.

44. Regarding paragraphs 23 and 24, he said that juvenile delinquency was a cause of great concern. He expressed deep gratitude to the non-governmental organizations, whose number had risen from 10 to 100, for their work with children of every kind, including handicapped children and street children whom they reintegrated into society. The technical and financial assistance received from non-governmental organizations for children in vulnerable circumstances had amounted to $30 million in 1992.

45. Regarding paragraph 25, he referred the Committee to paragraph 69 of the initial report. Vietnamese law prohibited discrimination between the children of married couples and those of unmarried couples. On paragraph 26 he said that parents who abandoned their children were severely criticized in the media and were forced to take them back under the pressure of public opinion.

46. With regard to paragraph 27 he was pleased to inform the Committee that the Central Committee on the Protection and Care of Children had been raised to the status of a Ministry. There was a whole network of People's Committees, which worked at provincial level and kept the Central Committee well informed.

47. Turning to the issues relating to the right to an adequate standard of living, he said that following price liberalization in 1986 inflation had reached embarrassingly high levels, by as much as 1,000 per cent: the economists called it shock therapy. By contrast, before liberalization, a subsidy system had been in force, whereby prices had been set below the production price. Both a regulated and a free market had been in operation and exchange rates had varied widely. The situation had since improved: there was only one exchange rate and inflation, 17 per cent in 1992, was on the way down. Inflation had, however, forced his country to devalue its currency in 1992: whereas the exchange rate had been 14,600 dong to the dollar, it was currently at around 10,500 dong to the dollar. Although devaluation had contributed to a good trade performance - $2 billion exports in 1992 - the price of agricultural products had gone down, which had adversely affected farmers. Generally, however, stabilization had improved people's confidence in the value of the currency, with the result that they wanted to increase productivity and improve their standard of living.

48. In reply to paragraph 29, he said that the record on aid from developed countries was mixed. Viet Nam had suffered from the abrupt withdrawal of aid from the former USSR and Eastern Europe, amounting to billions of dollars, but it had subsequently developed new trade partners and was learning to live within its own strength. By restricting imports the huge trade deficit of $150 million had been reduced substantially. The United States trade embargo increased his country's difficulties, but perhaps it had its own domestic problems with regard to lifting the embargo (of which, he noted, the international oil companies were also victims). Help had been gratefully received from Sweden, above all, but also Australia, Italy, France, Finland, Norway and, lately, Japan. Among developing countries, Taiwan and the Republic of Korea had also given assistance, the latter in the form of official development assistance. Taiwan also headed the list of investors in the country, followed by Hong Kong and France; investment currently totalled $5.2 billion. Viet Nam had good relations with other Asian countries: Singapore was its biggest trading partner and Viet Nam was, he thought, Singapore's second biggest trading partner. The investment situation was generally satisfactory.

49. On paragraph 30, he said that if evictions did occur - when homes had to be demolished to make way for new roads, for example - those concerned had the right to be rehoused. People were aware of their right and would seek new housing. The Government was, however, greatly concerned about the problem of squatting.

50. With regard to paragraph 31 he said that whereas high-ranking officials had previously been granted free housing, that was no longer the case. Their salaries were expected to cover all expenses. The most unprivileged sector in obtaining housing was made up of people who came to the towns from rural areas and were unemployed.

51. Regarding paragraph 32 he said that, by contrast with Hanoi, where chaos reigned because small housing units were going up everywhere, there were no such problems in rural areas. In some cases the State and the individual cooperated in a joint investment to build houses. The individual was given favourable terms to repay the State in instalments. Alternatively, people could build their own houses, with help from their neighbours, whom they might help in their turn later. Materials such as straw and bamboo were to hand.

52. In reply to paragraph 33, he said that there had been centralized planning of housing construction, but that the process had become totally decentralized, to the extent that there was competition between ministries, departments and provinces to provide housing for needy families.

53. As for paragraph 34, there was no flight from the land to the cities, simply because it was easier to obtain housing in the country.

54. Regarding the question in paragraph 35 he said that non-governmental organizations were and had been very helpful in providing dwellings for such people as war veterans who might have lost their families.

55. With regard to the issue raised, under the right to physical and mental health, in paragraph 36, he said that the Government and the media were coordinating their efforts to alert the public to the dangers of AIDS. There had been 290 cases of the disease, including 75 foreigners. With the assistance of the World Health Organization some 47,000 people in high-risk groups, such as prostitutes and drug-users, had been tested; but his country needed more equipment to slow down the spread of the disease, which was already a threat. The Ministry of Health had achieved some success through its publicity campaign.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.